

## **Economic Development and Regeneration Advisory Board**

27 March 2018

Meeting held Bewick Hall Rooms 1 and 2, City Library, Charles Avison Building, 33 New Bridge Street West, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8AX

### **APPROVED MINUTES**

#### **Present:**

Councillor : I Malcolm (Chair)

Councillors: J Adams, G Bell, B Pickard, K Shaw and H Trueman

Co-opted Members: B Farhat and S Hanson

#### **26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Marshall and R Wearmouth and Co-opted Members S Glendinning, J Walker and G Hall.

#### **27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **28 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 January 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **29 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION PROGRESS UPDATE**

Submitted: An update report of the Thematic Lead for Economic Development and Regeneration (previously circulated and attached to Official Minutes).

Members considered the report which provided an update on activity and progress under the Economic Development and Regeneration theme of the Combined Authority. The report was introduced by G Currey and S McMillan.

Key areas of focus of the report included the following subjects:

- Inward investment successes and current enquiries for investment
- Work with the Department of International Trade
- Developing sector knowledge
- Government policies
- European Structural and Investment Fund
- Progress of Enterprise Zones

- Launch of the Our Economy 2018 report

Members thanked officers for the detailed information on the inward investment successes into the NECA area, which had been circulated recently, and asked for this information to be shared with the Leaders of the constituent local authorities.

Members welcomed the good attendance by a diverse audience of the launch of the Our Economy 2018 report, and the good feedback received. It was noted that the attendees included business and public sectors, including education sector.

In relation to the Post-18 Education Review, as referred to in paragraph 3.1 of the report, and specifically in relation to a Member's comment about the elitist education system in the UK and a query whether there was appropriate data collected, M Rainbow confirmed that there was data collected on socio-economic background of students entering and exiting universities. The data showed that students from more deprived backgrounds were less likely to go into graduates' jobs. Work to address this issue continued.

### **Update on the North of Tyne Devolution**

M Swales, on invitation from the Chair, provided an update on progress of discussions with regard to the proposed devolution for the North of Tyne and associated timetables.

It was noted that discussions were ongoing. Whilst there were some matters to address, there were no substantive issues unresolved. The Leaders of the constituent local authorities were hoping to meet on 17 April for the next stage of the process.

It was also noted that economic development was one of the subjects of discussions. Local authorities were generally in agreement to continue to work with a single inward investment team covering all seven local authorities and a single Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for the same area.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

## **30 NORTH EAST LEP SKILLS AND EDUCATION UPDATE**

Submitted: An update report of the Skills Director, North East Local Enterprise Partnership (previously circulated and attached to Official Minutes).

Members considered the report which provided an update on the North East LEP Skills and Education programmes and projects, specifically within the context of the Strategic Economic Plan. The report and associated presentation were introduced by M Rainbow, Skills Director of the North East LEP.

The Chair welcomed the amount of work that was being carried out. The ensuing discussion was focused on the measurement of success; tackling unemployment, including intergenerational unemployment; the various reasons for unemployment; improving employability skills, including communication skills; keeping everyone

informed about career choices; advantages and challenges associated with an ageing workforce; and the role of support and information for business start-up.

In response to questions and arising from the discussion, it was noted that:

- All programmes and projects were evaluated. This was also a requirement due to the way the programmes were funded.
- Work continued to address intergenerational unemployment and support wider community groups into work. This work included both working with younger people as well as with those over the age of fifty. It was understood that work with children at earlier stages was key for setting the right mind set and breaking barriers and misconceptions.
- Data showed better business survival rates for business start-ups by older people. The option of setting up a business later in life should be promoted and supported, and opportunities created.
- Whilst universities provided some support for business start-up, for most graduates starting their own business straight after the graduation was not their first choice. With regard to business start-up support, perhaps more focus should be given to supporting young people who already had some work experience.
- It was important to continue to collaborate on ensuring information was available to various groups on business-start up opportunities and support.

**RESOLVED** – That:

- i. The report and presentation be noted; and
- ii. A progress report and presentation be made available in approximately twelve months' time.

## 31 **AUTOMOTIVE DEEP DIVE**

Submitted: A report of the Chief Executive, North East Automotive Alliance (previously circulated and attached to Official Minutes).

Members considered the report which provided an overview of the automotive sector in the North East. P Butler, the Chief Executive Officer of the North East Automotive Alliance, introduced the report and delivered a presentation which set out further detail, including investment, opportunities and challengers with regard to the automotive sector in the North East.

The ensuing discussion included the following matters: the opportunities and challenges associated with the phasing out of diesel-run vehicles and increase in electric vehicles; the national infrastructure to achieve the transition; employment by the industry; skills shortages; the need for further improvements to the infrastructure, including the need for better transport to employment sites; the need for better support and funding from the government for the automotive sector in the

North East; the improving infrastructure for electric cars, including faster charging; the impact of an increase in electric cars on the electricity grid and future opportunities such as solar power; the relatively low but growing electric car ownership; the good pace of change within the sector; and new and emerging technologies.

**RESOLVED** – That:

- i. The report and presentation be noted; and
- ii. A copy of the presentation be circulated to all members for information.

32 **DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, 24 July 2018, subject to confirmation at the Annual Meeting.